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AN OPEN LETTER TO LICENSEES AND OTHERS CONCERNED

Stephen E. Higgins, Director of the Bureau
of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

"I want to bring to your attention possible Gun Control Act violations in which you could inadvertently become involved.

ATF has encountered with increasing frequency various AR15-type assault rifles such as those manufactured by Colt, E.A. Comanv. SGW, Sendra and others, which have been assembled with internal components designed for use in M16 machineguns. It has been found that the vast majority of these rifles which have been assembled with an M16 bolt carrier, hammer, trigger, disconnecter and selector will fire automatically merely by manipulation of the selector or removal of the disconnecter. Many of these rifles using less than the five M16 parts listed above also will shoot automatically by manipulation of the selector or removal of the disconnecter.

It must be pointed out that any weapon which shoots automatically, more than one shot, without

manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger is a machinegun as defined in 26 U.S.C. Section 5845 (b), the National Firearms Act (NFA). In addition, the definition of a machinegun also includes any combination of parts from which a machinegun may be assembled, if such parts are in possession or under the control of a person. Any machinegun is subject to the NFA and the possession of an unregistered machinegun could subject the possessor to criminal prosecution.

Additionally, these rifles could pose a safety hazard in that they may fire automatically without the user being aware that the weapon will fire more than one shot with a single pull of the trigger.

In order to avoid possible violations of the NFA, M16 hammers, triggers, disconnecters, selectors and bolt carriers must not be used in assembly of AR15-type semi-automatic rifles, unless the M16

parts have been modified to AR15 Model SP1 configuration. Any AR15-type rifles which have been assembled with M16 internal components should have those parts removed and replaced with AR15 Model SP1 type parts. These parts are available commercially or the M16 component may be modified to AR15 Model SP1 configuration.

It is important to note that any modification of the M16 parts should only be attempted by fully qualified personnel.

On the following page are illustrations of AR15 Model SP1 component parts and the corresponding M16-type parts. Should you have any questions concerning AR15-type rifles with M16 parts, please contact your nearest ATF law enforcement office. Our telephone numbers are listed in the United States Government section of your telephone directory under the United States Treasury Department."